

SECRETARY OF DEFENSE WILLIAM J. PERRY
INTERVIEW WITH JOURNALIST FROM RED STAR NEWSPAPER
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Q: ...You were the first one among the leaders of the world to (inaudible). Not just the [generals], but the people in charge of the (inaudible) [servicemen]. (Inaudible) [NCO] in charge of military. So that you could see (inaudible).

A: Thank you very much.

Q: The one thing I wanted to address very much, (inaudible). ...The official newspaper of (inaudible), and we have the (inaudible). It is indeed a very (inaudible). We try to do the best, accurately, and it was really a great pleasure for me to [interview] all the U.S. Ambassadors that have been here lately. Mr. Matlock, Mr. Perle, Mr. (inaudible), and indeed, (inaudible). It is very important for the Russian people to know (inaudible) of Russia (inaudible). (Inaudible) European affairs. (Inaudible).

I am very happy that your wife is here and you (inaudible) just yesterday writing on our computer these (inaudible). I had my colleagues coming in and reading on the screen what I was writing. They say [wow], two universities; a bunch of commercial firms; five children. Whenever (inaudible) to do everything. I believe that (inaudible).

(Inaudible) academician (inaudible) establishment for the world? Can you explain the mechanics of such a [drive]?

A: When I finished my doctorate degree in mathematics the new developments in electronics were just starting. The transistor was being introduced, and this new field of solid state electronics didn't, nobody had any training for it. Engineers to that point had not been trained. So, the people who pioneered in that field were mathematicians and physicists. So, I just finished, by chance, finished my PhD at the time that this new field in electronics started, so, instead of going into mathematics, I went into electronics. I joined an electronics company. In time I became the director of a laboratory. Then I founded my own electronics company. In the course of doing this, some of the work that our company did was for the Defense Departments, so I got to understand defense electronics and became an adviser to the Defense Department and therefore, came to know people in the Defense Department.

Then in 1977 one of the people that I had been advising, Harold Brown, had just been appointed Secretary of Defense, and he asked me if I would come into the Defense Department as the Under Secretary in charge of all of the research and engineering. I agreed to do that. So, in those four years I developed quite a bit of experience in defense, but still went back to private industry after that administration was completed.

Then when the new administration started, some people looked at my background in both science and defense and decided I might be a good... So I came in to be the Deputy Secretary of Defense and was that for a year when I was asked to become the Secretary. So, it evolved.

Q: Are you happy with the career of yours not in the academic field or maybe not in the private field, in the state (inaudible)? Are you happy with this career of yours?

A: It's a very different career. Yes, I am happy with it but it's very different from being in private industry, or being in the university. The challenges are much greater. The difficulty of getting things done is much greater. But the satisfaction, the fulfillment if you can succeed, is greater because of the importance of what you're doing.

Q: I believe that one of the challenges that you mentioned is a very specific side of your relations with the military. The fact that you, as a civilian, as a politician, command the whole bunch of generals, admirals, the greatest military machine with hundreds of thousands of soldiers all around the world, but still being a civilian, it seems to me to be quite a challenge. Is it?

A: Of course in the United States and most other democracies, the principle has been long established of civilian control of the military. That does not mean that the civilians make the decision about when a division attacks, or when airplanes conduct a strike, but it means that they have the overall responsibility for the Defense Department. And in turn, I report to the President, and the President has the ultimate decision, the decision of whether or not we should go to war. Indeed, in our country, not only can he make that decision, but it has to be ratified by our Congress.

So, all of the major decisions in our defense establishment are civilian. Made by the Secretary of Defense, made by the President, ratified by the Congress. So, the civilian control of defense is a very important principle of the United States.

Q: There have been rumors, maybe they're not quite correct, but there were such rumors that the military people tend to dislike some aspects of President Clinton's attitude toward the military. There were reports, I read it in the American press, that the Generals already like the way Mr. Perry just solved the problems, and conducted

the military, and your relations with the military seem to be much more happier than the President's.

A: I have very good relations with the military, but it's my observation that the President does, also. I've been with the President on several trips to military bases and he is received with great enthusiasm and with great respect by soldiers and sailors and airmen who meet him.

I was with him when he went to a West Point graduation, an Army academy, and I would say that was an enormously enthusiastic reception by the thousand or so cadets and Army men who were there.

Q: He delivered a big speech there.

A: Yes. So I think to the extent stories, media stories say...

Q: They...

A: I just don't think they're correct. I have seen no evidence...

Q: Unlike many politicians say in this country and maybe in the United States as well, you have personally served with the armed forces, and as far as I know, you were a non-commissioned officer with the (inaudible).

A: Correct.

Q: Has your own military experience helped you to understand, although I understand that the Army was quite different than today's Army, but still, your own military experience, soldier's experience, does it help you today?

A: Yes, in the sense that it gives me some... It allows me to identify with and understand and sympathize with soldiers, having been one myself once. No, in the sense that it does not make me a tactician. I never was high enough in the ranks to have developed military tactic skills.

Q: Sure. What I meant was really the attitude of..

A: The attitude and the understanding. Not only do I feel that, but I think the military people that I work with sense that I sympathize and understand their problems.

Q: Mr. Secretary, one of the...I don't know whether I like it or not, but it's a reality that when the American press, today, says what Mr. Aspin has done during his stay as head of the Pentagon, they mention the Tailhook scandal, or the decision on the homosexuals. But the last thing they remember is the report on the Bottom-Up Review, that is maybe one of the most important things that Mr. Aspin has managed to do. As far as I remember, you were one of the leading figures in preparing the Bottom-Up

Review, and is, maybe, a (inaudible) that foresees the fate of the U.S. armed forces, not just for one year, but for maybe a decade.

Do you think that everything has been done correct with that Bottom-Up Review? I want to follow the line that has been drawn by Mr. Aspin.

A: Yes. I worked with Secretary Aspin very closely on that Bottom-Up Review. I believe it was the best description we could make at that time, what we should be doing in our armed forces. But we knew at the time we finished the document that it was not complete, so we have continuing, ongoing studies to supplement and add to the conclusions we made in that Bottom-Up Review. We're not revisiting the basic conclusions, but we are adding additional, doing more analyses to add additional detail.

You might consider the studies we're doing now as appendices or annexes to the Bottom-Up Review. They don't replace it, they supplement it.

Q: Yeah, and as far as I know, the nuclear strategy is to be reviewed as well?

A: That's being done now and is to be completed this summer. We simply deferred that study during the Bottom-Up Review. We did not have time to do it in detail.

Q: And if we come back to today's visit to Moscow, are you happy with the state of U.S./Russian military relations? Do you think they're just as good as the two countries deserve to have relations?

A: Yes. The defense-to-defense, military-to-military relationship between the United States and Russia is very strong today, very good. It's as strong as I've ever known it.

Q: Do you often use that direct line with Mr. Grachev?

A: I've used it perhaps four or five times in the last month.

Q: What did you discuss, if they are not secret, naturally?

A: We had several discussions about Bosnia. He was raising questions to me about the NATO ultimatum. Other discussions...I was asking him for assistance in Bosnia so that we could avoid having to use the ultimatum and having to actually conduct air strikes. I think he was very helpful in that regard.

We also have discussed -- we did not need a hotline to do this -- but, on this meeting I discussed both with Mr. Grachev and Mr. Kosiva in getting additional assistance from the Russians relative to the peace agreements we're finding in Bosnia. So, those were some of the issues we discussed on the hotline. We have also talked

some about the Partnership for Peace. We talked about a variety of things. But, it's usually the issue which is important and current that particular week.

Q: You mentioned the Partnership for Peace. Today, I believe, you had a chance in yesterday's meeting with members of the parliament to see (inaudible) that Russian people are very much interested in, not only in a positive way, but there are also negative assessments.

Do you think out of these partnerships between the NATO countries and Russia, in particular, it would be equally useful for both sides? Or maybe NATO would have more privileges in such situations so that it would ask Russia to do something in the military sphere and Russia would have to comply, would be...

A: There's nothing in the Partnership for Peace like that. First of all, it's voluntary in the sense that only countries that want to join will join. Secondly, the particular way that Russia participates will be specified in a proposal that Russia makes. Each country that applies to join, specifies how they want to participate, what portion of their military forces they want to be involved and how much they're willing to use the peacekeeping operations. So, each country can specify its own level of involvement. We would expect Russia to specify a significant level of involvement, compared with the other smaller countries that are signing up.

Q: I believe that's a part of the (inaudible) because Partnership for Peace was assessed in this country from the point of view that it was a most... but it had to be built on so that there would be more complete details. What exactly is to be done, maybe what exercises are to be carried, so that the plan, or [concrete deeds] that would fill up the (inaudible). Did you discuss that with Russia now?

A: Yes, the Partnership for Peace is much more than a slogan. It lays out very specific activities involving joint exercises, involving training together, involving making communications equipment interoperable so that forces from different countries can work together. It's a concrete set of activities.

The name for it, Partnership for Peace, sounds like a float, but it's an accurate description of what's actually being done.

Q: You mentioned joint exercises. The first one is to be filled this summer by the units of the 3rd U.S. Infantry Division and the 27th Russian Motor Rifle Division, yes?

A: That's a bilateral exercise between the United States and Russian forces. That's not under the sponsorship of the Partnership for Peace. So, even if Russia had not joined the Partnership for Peace, we would go ahead with that bilateral exercise.

Q: The outcome of the Persian Gulf War, or the multilateral action in Somalia, would they be different if the United States and Russia cooperated more directly? Not just in the political sphere, but in the military as well?

A: I don't think the war itself would have gone any differently. It's conceivable that if the United States and Russia had cooperated more actively before the war we could have headed it off, could have somehow avoided the war in the Gulf. But that's only speculation. It's hard to tell.

Q: Sure, but no one knows the way (inaudible). Speaking about Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia in general. The efforts taken by the international community show that there may be a positive result when our people do really want to do something to prevent bloodshed. Do you think that (inaudible) is such an experience, could be used in some of the former Soviet republics that are now waging wars, say in Georgia, in Azerbaijan, in Tajikistan, or whatever? Such an experience of the international community of using peacekeeping forces, could it be used?

A: That's a difficult question. It's one which is in front of the United Nations right now. I believe the United Nations does have an important role to play in that area. The question is whether the United Nations should play a role, but whether they are well enough organized and well enough funded to take on operations that complex and that large.

Q: If they take such a decision would the United States participate in such actions?

A: The United States, as a minimum, would underwrite a substantial amount of the expenses for the operation because we are involved in something like 30 percent of the cost of these operations the United Nations undertakes. Certainly, participating that way. We might also participate logistically, as advisers. I don't believe we would have any interest in sending ground troops in any more than we (inaudible) into Bosnia.

Q: ...as well, and sort of (inaudible) the majority of the ground troops would be Russia, yes, indeed.

Speaking about the former Soviet republics, you are supposed to visit three more of them and while it is natural to suppose that the major topics would be the (inaudible) [organization], yes? And the compliance with the START Treaties...

Do you foresee any difficulties in those [starts] being implemented in those republics?

A: Yes. It's always difficult, but we're making real progress. The trilateral agreement which was signed in Moscow in January was a major step forward to

effecting denuclearization in Ukraine. Getting the nuclear weapons removed from the missiles and shipped into Russia for dismantlement.

I will discuss, when I'm in Ukraine, the followup to that to be sure that that's moving ahead as has been agreed to. The agreement is completely satisfactory, as far as we're concerned. We'd like to see a similar agreement being reached with Kazakhstan, and the Kazakhstani and the Russian government are negotiating an agreement like that right now. At this point, the United States has not been involved in those discussions, and we would not propose to be involved in the discussions unless Russia and Kazakhstan came to us and asked us for help, as was the case with Ukraine and Russia.

Q: One of the incentives would be the existence of the Nunn/Lugar fund as is the case say, with the Russians, the Ukrainians, the Belarusian Republic, yes?

A: The Nunn/Lugar fund has been the primary source of funds for supporting all of those activities, all of the denuclearization activities in all four countries.

Q: When [senators] were here in Moscow...I just wanted to give a part of the (inaudible) used to finance the destroying of the nuclear, the chemical weapons. And the [senators] said they're working on that and maybe assistance from the USA would come in the form of maybe some technologies, or maybe certain sums of money.

A: We just signed today an agreement to provide, I believe it was \$35 billion, to build a chemical/analytical research facility that's dedicated to this problem. The construction of that is going to get underway very soon. That will be Nunn/Lugar money, and specifically directed to the Russian... Not only the elimination of chemical weapons, but doing it in an environmentally, ecologically sound way.

Q: Because, when I was the first financial assistant, it was just the cost of the weapons being eliminated, but after that, people started to worry about the political side and said, "Well, if it is so dangerous then [should] such a shipment be made?" And maybe not that much money is needed, but to make it at ease where the people were sure that everything would be okay, that then they would be safe, and so on and so forth.

One of the problems that the United States was (inaudible) Russia and Russian army to deal with was the housing for the military officers. As far as I know, you discussed this problem with Prime Minister Chernomyrden on this visit?

A: Yes. We discussed in much greater detail during the meeting of our joint U.S./Russian Committee on Defense Diversification. We have agreed that one of the major projects that will be sponsored by that commission will be the funding to bring a

pre-fabricated housing industry in Russia. That funding has already been committed, and that program will be getting started in a matter of weeks from now.

In this case, it's not to build the houses, it's to convert one of the defense factories so that it will be able to build the pre-fabricated houses. So, there will be a pre-fabricated housing industry created by this process.

Q: I see.

I want to put a question to Mrs. Perry. Would you tell me if such a busy career of your husband, does it interfere with the process of raising up your children, for example? You've got five of them, which is (inaudible) for the Russian situation nowadays.

Mrs. Perry: It would be very difficult but our children are all grown. We have to make as much time as we can for our private lives. It's very difficult because he has such a busy career. So, we work very hard at that, and I try to be as much a part of it as I can. I consider myself his severest critic. (Laughter)

Q: Thank you.

Mr. Secretary, do you suppose your children would be a bit younger, your sons and your daughter, would you advise them to join the U.S. armed forces?

A: My children are all too old to seriously consider that now, but I think the U.S. armed forces offer a fine career for any young person. If any of my children were 18 or 19 now and considering a career, I would certainly be happy to recommend them for that. I have, in fact, recommended to children of some of my friends (inaudible) to get commissions in the armed forces, to go to West Point, or to get a scholarship to go to one of the colleges for military medicine. Yes, it's a fine career and I would recommend it enthusiastically.

Q: As a matter of fact, forgive me, but I wanted to tell you that when I was...

(Pause in tape)

A: ...We encourage and support ever-deepening contacts between the Russian military and the American military.

Q: Speaking about the relations, yesterday you mentioned that the relations between the United States and Russia to a great degree depend on personal relations between the Ministers of Defense of both countries. So, judging from this one, do you think that today the relations between the United States and Russia are good enough? Do you think...

A: You mean military....

Q: No, I mean in general. You mentioned that relations between yourself and to a great extent the (inaudible) are very much to the general relations between the countries. So, do you think that you would [have good] enough relations with the Russian Minister?

A: I have excellent relations with the Russian Minister. I think he would say the same thing as well. This trip, one of the purposes of this trip was to build on those good relations and make them even stronger, and I think we're quite successful in that.

Q: While in Duma, the Russian parliament, did you see that people there understand what stands behind that drive of the two great countries towards one another? Rather often we see and hear and read that in the United States tries to [terminate] over Russia, to dictate its will, to tell us what to do and what not to do to Russian people, so did you see that... Was the assessment just realistic in the parliament?

A: I thought there was some skepticism among some of the people that I talked to in the Duma about the value of the relationship between the U.S. and Russia. I told them that I thought what we should strive for was a pragmatic partnership. By that, I mean a partnership where we identify those areas where we have common interest and work very hard together, cooperatively there. In those areas where we have different interests, we simply recognize that our two countries have different interests and we remain friends about it, but we don't try to persuade each other of our view.

Q: Two people may have different interests and it is not a tragedy.

A: We have different interests from Japan and different interests from France in many areas, still we are partners within most of the things we do. It can be that way with Russia as well.

Q: One thing is that the problems will be solved peacefully and on the basis of certain discussions, so there is no confrontation or dramatization, I should say. It's a real world and things may happen. I agree that the story with the spy case was a very good example when President Clinton said there was such a case and he will deal with it, and now he said actions that we would suppose ten years or five years ago there would be a huge scandal, though now we see that these things happen and those incidents are not the basis to influence (inaudible) between the countries. Maybe they are certain pinpoints, maybe not always very good ones, but still not the ones that determine the whole spectrum of our [relations].

This is your first visit to Moscow?

A: I have visited Moscow many times. This is the first time I've visited as....

Q: No, I mean as the Secretary.

A: That's right.

Q: I believe that you didn't have enough time to see Moscow, so were you happy to visit Moscow as a non-Secretary or... Now not time enough to see around.

A: That's one of the disadvantages of being Secretary, there's not enough time to be a tourist.

Mrs. Perry: I think it's possible to schedule a half day of touring, but it has to be scheduled (inaudible). You miss the relaxation, and also you miss seeing a lot of (inaudible).

I want to change the word (inaudible) to frank, constructive critic.

Q: You know, if you still have that possibility, there is a whole day of your spare time, which places would you choose just to visit, to see?

Mrs. Perry: I would recommend (inaudible).

Q: Well, I believe that whatever you would choose, you would recommend to your husband, and you will comply with it. (Laughter)

Mrs. Perry: It doesn't matter whether you've been here or not before, what you've seen. This morning we witnessed several classes at the choreographing academy which was very exciting. They were trained at (inaudible). It was very nice. And we saw a very fine tour of the Kremlin. I would recommend both. It wasn't your usual tour of the Kremlin. The [diamond] collection, the (inaudible) collection.

Q: But did you manage to see...

Mrs Perry: ...icons.

Q: Mr. Perry?

A: No. (Laughter)

Mrs. Perry: We've [walked] in the Kremlin on our own before, but...

Q: But there were (inaudible) [weapons] in the Kremlin besides that [diamond] (inaudible) where ancient weapons and other relics, and I believe it would be interesting to you as a specialist in that theater.

Mrs. Perry: He might get some weapon ideas. (Laughter)

Q: But those are ancient weapons, and very nice ones. And have you seen that huge gun, the (inaudible)?

A: Yes, I did see that.

Q: The one that never fired.

A: That's the best kind of gun.

(Pause in tape)

A: ...for security reasons, not for economic reasons, and yet it's clear that economic considerations drive (inaudible) I think to an unfortunate extent. That's probably true all over the world, not just in Russia.

It was nice to talk to you.

(END)